



# Navigating Learner Pathways:

Exploring how we find information  
about adult education and training



**Presenter: Olga Herrmann, MTML**

**February 21, 2013**

**Language Services - #CdnImm Event**

# Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML)

Regional network that is charged with the coordination of adult literacy and upgrading programs funded by MTCU in Toronto, York Region and Bradford.

- Service planning and coordination
- Network facilitation
- Communications and outreach
- Professional development
- **Research and Development**
- Information & Referral





**PHASE ONE –**  
**Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections**

**&**

**PHASE TWO –**  
**Visualizing the Learning Journey**

**EXPLORING LEARNER PATHWAYS**



# PROJECT BACKGROUND

## State of the Ferry System...

### *Ontario Learns (2005)*

- “an archipelago (of programs) without a good ferry system”
- The provincial government’s vision for adult education in Ontario articulated in 2005



# Too Many Left Behind –

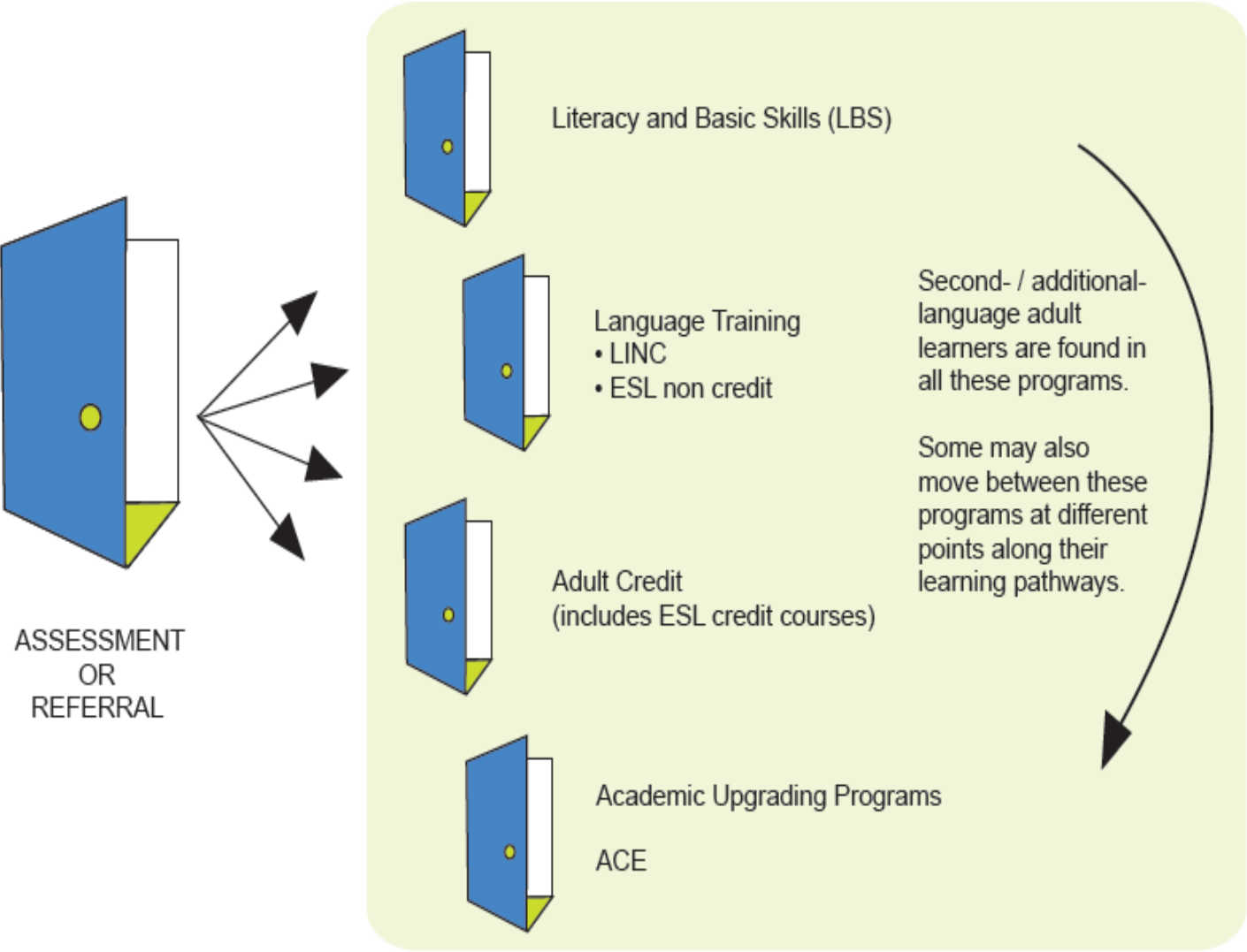
Meyers and de Broucker (2006)

Documented the availability of formal learning opportunities for adult in 5 provinces (Alberta, B.C., Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec)

This study pointed out that our current adult learning systems are:

- Fragmented
- Incomplete
- Difficult to navigate

# ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH LANGUAGE AND/OR LITERACY NEEDS



**Immigrants  
are found in  
all adult  
education  
programs**

# Immigrant Realities

Recent immigrants (who have arrived since 2001) are over **three times more likely than Canadian-born workers to have lost jobs in the recent economic downturn**, and will likely face greater challenges re-entering employment.

*Toronto's Vital Signs (2009)*

Very recent Immigrants (5 yrs or less) are more likely to live in poverty – **23.8%** considered **low income in 2009** (much higher than the province's overall low income rate of 13.1 %).

*Drummond Report (2012)*

Almost 1 in 5 of immigrants with **low-level literacy skills** (i.e. 1,033,660 individuals) are expected to be living in Toronto by 2031.

*Canadian Council on Learning (2010)*



***Service coordination across the adult education programs is a priority for all three learning ministries (TCU, EDU, MCI).***

***“It’s clear to us all, in all three ministries, that immigrants are in all our programs. They’re stakeholders for all of us. Their pathway is a critical focus.”***

*-- Pauline McNaughton,  
EDU’s Manager of the Adult Education Policy Unit  
2011 TESL Ontario Conference*



# PHASE ONE –

## Exploring Learner Pathways: Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections

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### Data Collection:

#### – Focus Groups

- LBS Learners – 74 [13 focus groups]
- LBS Teachers – 18 teachers/tutors [5 groups]
- LBS Assessors – 9 assessors [2 groups]

#### – Interviews/Consultations – multiple stakeholders

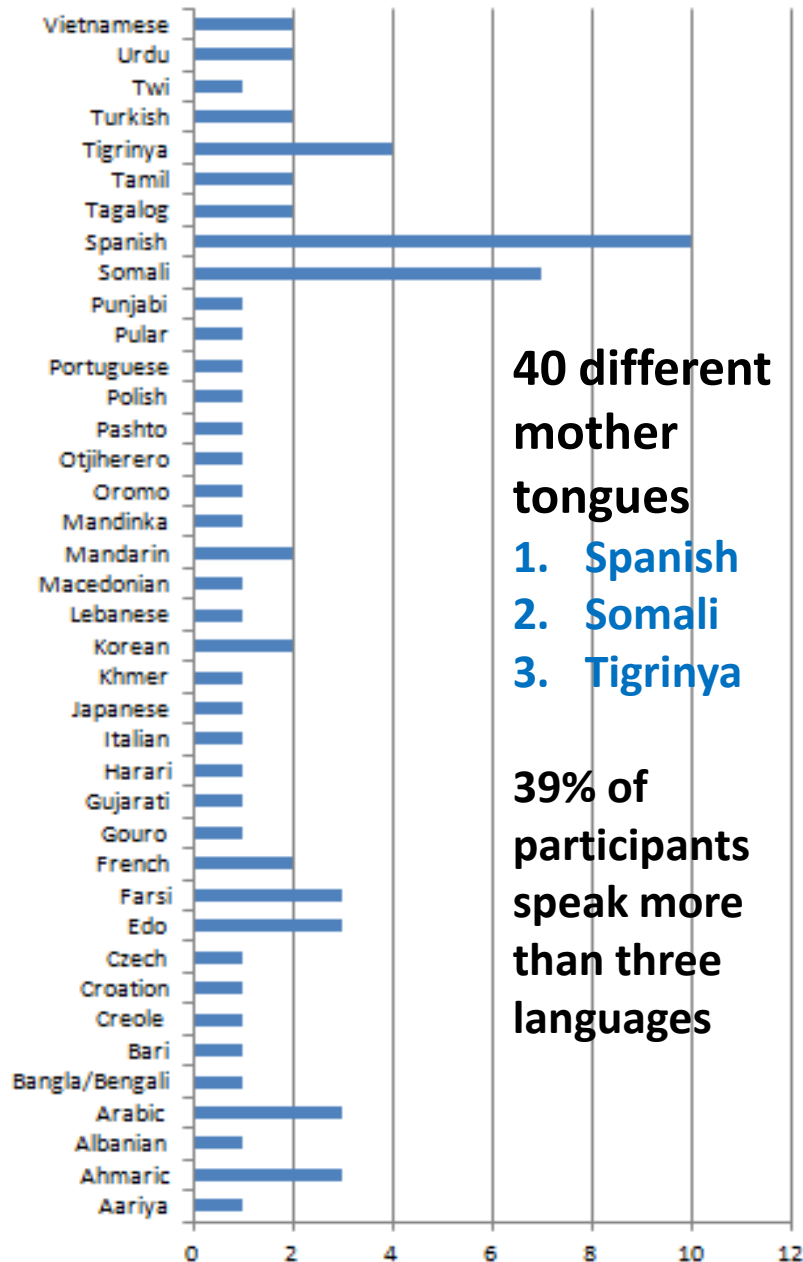
#### – Online Assessor Survey

#### – Online Tool – A Project Blog

<http://learnerpathways.wordpress.com>

**A Front-line  
Focus**

## Mother Tongue - Learner Focus Groups



40 different  
mother  
tongues

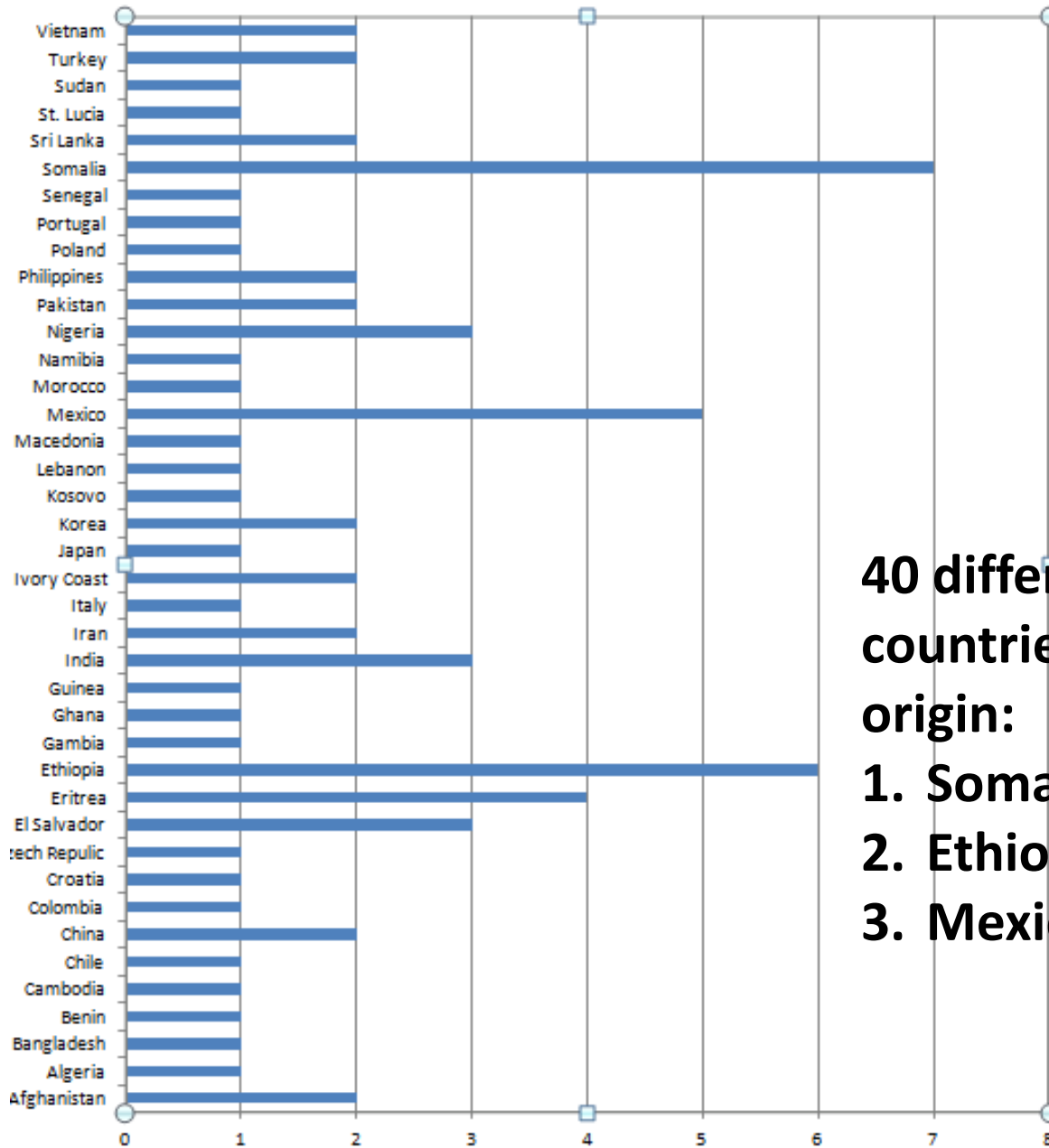
1. Spanish
2. Somali
3. Tigrinya

39% of  
participants  
speak more  
than three  
languages

■ Number of focus group  
participants who identified this  
mother tongue

PHASE ONE –  
**DIVERSITY OF  
LEARNERS -  
Language**

## Country of Origin Number of Participants

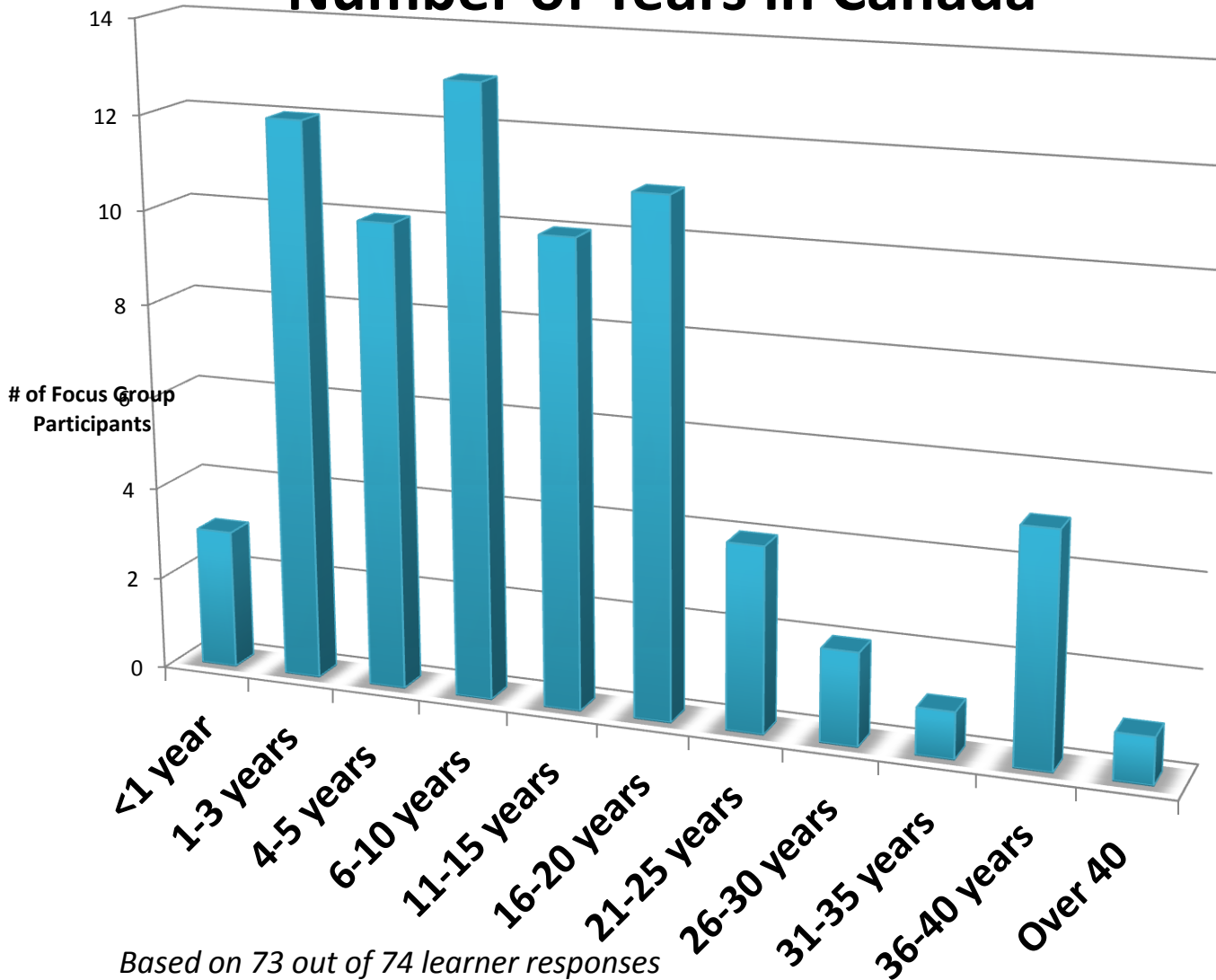


40 different  
countries of  
origin:

1. Somalia
2. Ethiopia
3. Mexico

**PHASE ONE –  
DIVERSITY OF  
LEARNERS –  
Country of  
Origin**

# Number of Years in Canada



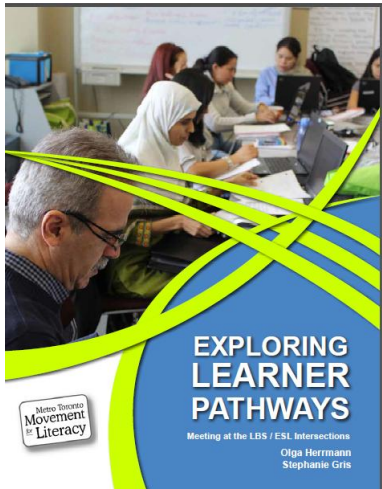
***Just over half of the focus group participants (51%) indicated they have been in Canada 10 years or less.***

< 1 year	4%
1-3 years	16%
4-5 years	14%
6-8 years	9%
9-10 years	8%
11-14 years	8%
15-19 years	11%
20-25 years	16%
26-30 years	3%
31-35 years	1%
36-40 years	5%
> 40 years	1%

# Exploring Learner Pathways (2012)

## Phase 1 report by Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy

Excerpts from  
Stakeholder  
Interviews in  
the GTA



- “**Misinformation or gaps in information with respect to other programs and their eligibility criteria** were found to be a reality as the researchers interviewed a number of stakeholders in LBS, language training, settlement, and OW programs.”
- “Many stakeholders across the programs felt that the **separation of programs** under the various ministries – siloed program and funding structures – did create **an element of competition** between the programs. It was noted, however, that **the informal relationships between programs and the initiative of staff** dedicated to serving the best interest of the learners are what lead to learners being referred to other adult education and training options that make more sense from both a pedagogical and/or goal-oriented perspective. “
- “Managers from some of the larger education institutions offering ESL (credit and non-credit), LBS, LINC and EDU courses report that the **program managers rarely if ever sit down together to discuss learner transitions across the programs.**”

Learners said they **learned about the program** in the following ways:

- Word of mouth (friends, family, other learners)
- OW case worker
- ESL non-credit teacher; ESL credit teacher
- Referred to program from college assessor
- My math teacher at college
- Found program on the Internet
- Walk-in -- program in my community
- “At the office...they say I’m talking so good and I said, eventually I want to go from here to college or get a job and they introduced me to...LBS program”

**PHASE ONE –**

**Meeting at the LBS/ESL Intersections**



# Recommendations – Phase One

1. **Improve access to information about the range of learning and training programs** offered by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Ministry of Education, and by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
2. Create opportunities and resources for **service delivery agencies providing adult language, literacy** and learning programs to **increase their knowledge and awareness of each other.**
3. **Support partnerships and collaborative initiatives between language and literacy providers.**
4. Develop and implement a screening and assessment approach that is flexible and responsive to the complex needs of the learners, to be used by language programs/CLARS centres and literacy programs when determining a learner's eligibility and suitability.
5. Provide a greater diversity of language training and literacy programs in order to address the distinct needs of different groups of learners.

# Phase Two rooted in Phase One...

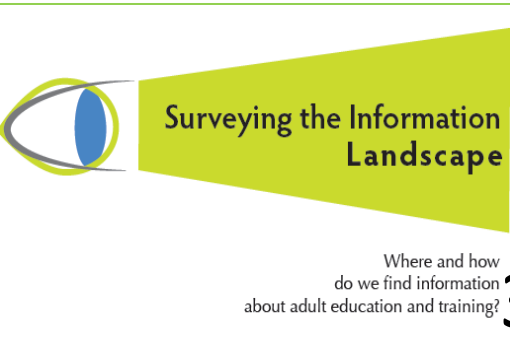


The need for **easy-access tools** that provide clear and accurate information about the **broad array of adult education program** options and about **common learning pathways** and well-defined **transition points** is something that repeatedly surfaced from our Phase One research components.



# Navigating the Adult Education Information

## Literature Review & Environmental Scan



1. What adult education programs are available to your clients?
2. How do you find out about these programs? How do your clients find out about these programs?
3. What do you know about supporting clients who have language and literacy needs?

# HOW DO LEARNERS FIND INFORMATION ABOUT ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES?

Question: How Did You **First** Find Out About This Class?

EDUCATION	Friend or Family Told Me	Internet	Settlement or Social Services Agency	School Board or College	Library	Other	Number of Responses
None	66%	3%	21%	1%	1%	8%	143
Grade School	65%	4%	22%	3%	2%	4%	645
Some High School	61%	4%	22%	4%	4%	5%	884
Completed High School	60%	7%	21%	4%	4%	4%	1,389
Some College or University	58%	10%	17%	5%	4%	5%	1,088
Trade Certificate	46%	11%	27%	3%	2%	12%	188
Completed College	58%	10%	17%	5%	4%	6%	525
Completed University	52%	17%	17%	4%	3%	7%	2,208

## LEARNER PROVENANCE – HOW LEARNERS FIND THEIR WAY TO THE LBS PROGRAM



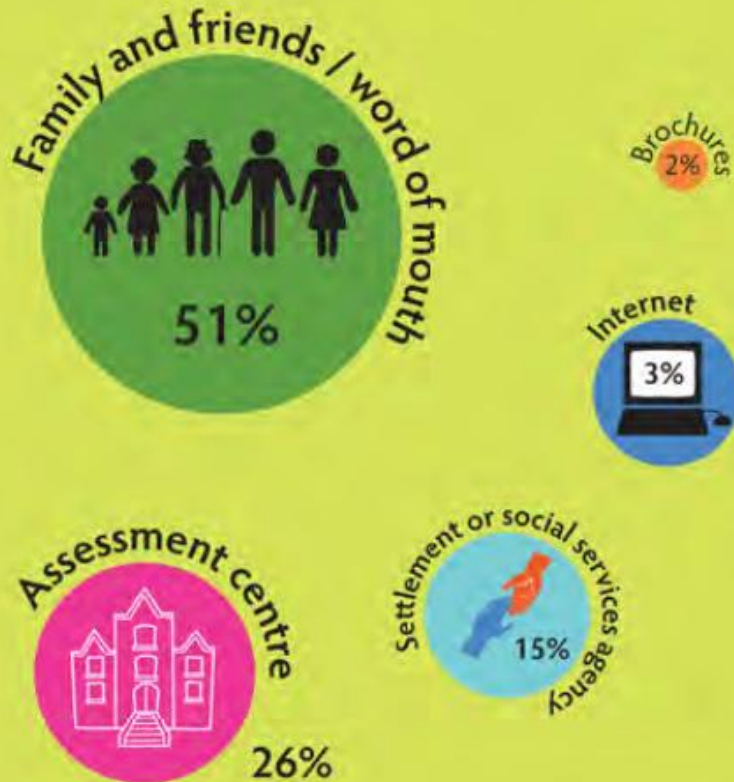
The online survey asked assessors how learners with ESL needs come to their literacy or upgrading program. Respondents were able to select multiple options:

The chart that follows on the next page shows that self referrals, word of mouth, referrals through other LBS programs and through clients' OW caseworkers are the most common ways through which the learners targeted in this report come to be in their LBS programs.

	Percentage of respondents
Informally referred from an ESL program	42%
Informally referred from a LINC program	42%
Referred through an Ontario Works caseworker	71%
Referred through Employment Ontario Employment Services	67%
Directed to the LBS program by the Literacy Access Network hotline	33%
Through word of mouth information from family, friends or other LBS students	83%
Referred from another LBS program	75%
Referred informally from Adult Credit high schools	38%
Self referral (learner found the program on his/her own; internet search/posters/walk-in)	88%
Other	25%

# LINC Stats - The Disconnect

How did you first find out about this class?



How do you promote your program?



Data from Evaluation of LINC Program 2010 learner and administrator surveys



# INFORMATION PRACTICES OF IMMIGRANTS and LOW LITERACY INDIVIDUALS

- Information Practices of Immigrants - a settlement stages framework (needs, barriers, sources)

(Caidi, Allard, Dechief; 2008)

- Social capital – bonding and bridging capital
- Gatekeepers; Immigrant Children Mediators
- The alien information environment
- Information poverty
- Digital divide – access
- Ubiquity of ICTs and need for ICT skills
- Information is more easily understood when presented in visual or oral form
- Information overload ‘noise’ (Kennan et al., 2011)



# Phase 2 – Project Focus

Focuses on **developing information tools** intended to provide the front lines of adult education programs (i.e. learners, teachers, assessors) in Toronto and York Region with **easy-access visual materials** that increase awareness and understanding of:

- Program options across the ministries
- Learner profiles / learning pathways
- Key transition points between the programs for learners with both English as a second language and literacy and basic skills needs



**All this is accomplished through cross-ministerial and cross-program collaboration, as well as relationship-building with other stakeholders.**

## PHASE TWO

### Visualizing the Learning Journey

# THE NEED FOR INFORMATION ABOUT LEARNING OPTIONS

“For me is very important about the information, again. That’s *the most important*. We know about this program, for most of the person somebody tell. I have another friend who experience ESL, high diploma, LBS and now he is at the college and his life changed. We are a person who doesn’t know something about the country. We need to follow the instructions.”

*(LBS learner in a school board program)*



# Exploring Learner Pathways – Visualizing the Learning Journey *...TOGETHER*

Questions / Comments



[www.learnerpathways.wordpress.com](http://www.learnerpathways.wordpress.com)

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Thank you...





# MIND THE GAP...

	STAGE I Beginner Level				STAGE II Intermediate Level				STAGE III Advanced Level			
SPEAKING												
LISTENING												
READING												
WRITING												
CLB LEVELS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

THE GAP

Higher level proficiency  
Speaking / Listening  
coupled with a **considerably**  
lower level Reading / Writing

CLB Level of Speaking/  
Listening skills identified  
as appropriate for entry  
to an LBS program